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1913

SONGS AND
SONNETS

SONGS AND SONNETS

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CHICAGO

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GOOD friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To "knock" the stuff enclosed here;
The work it cost me I suppose
God and no other knows.

At some, no doubt, your tears will flow,
At some you'll laugh with glee,—
I wish to heaven I might know
At which ones that will be!

CITY NIGHTS

NOT all the beauty of the summer night
Is seen in rustic glens and far found
woodland spaces;

Beauty there is if one but see aright,
In urban places.

Not beauty such as easy idlers view
In flowery dell or dainty sunset hue,
But beauty of a sterner, ruder sort,
Of builded bulk and fiery retort.

Here glows the crucible wherein is wrought
The magic of our modern alchemy;
Here visions with a deepest meaning fraught
Discerning eyes may see.

Seen true, those towering masses are not
dumb,

Dead hulks of steel and stone; they have
become

Sky-shouldering giants that do crowd for
space,

Like mighty monsters of some saurian race.

Surely within yon cumbrous tentacle,

Slow groaning o'er its task, some life must be;

Some cosmic impulse, animate, purposeful,

There struggles to be free.

Surely some god speaks in that mighty roar;

Those myriad lights we see
Are his vast vulcanry
Where temples are in building—nay, 'tis
more,
'Tis where a million mortals strive and strain,
With weariness and pain,
To forge with all its wondrous enginery,
A nation's destiny!

SONNET

MUSING to-night in that strange twilight zone
That marks the space 'twixt sleep
and waking hours,
Vague thoughts and curious fancies have I
known,—
Voices have spoken,—long forgotten flowers
Have shed their fragrance round me;—even-
ing bells
Have rung again their old-time lullabies.—
Softly I've listened to the lisp that tells
Where still lakes glisten under starlit skies,
Or where some ancient hemlock's somber
gleam
Is dimly mirrored in some moonlit stream.

Breathless I wait lest some returning sense
Shatter the dream to daytime elements—
Whate'er the breaking day may have in store,
If these be dreams, God grant I wake no more.

I STOOD TO-DAY FOR A BRIEF MOMENT'S SPACE

I STOOD to-day for a brief moment's space
Within that secret place
Where Nature dons her queenliest attire
To greet the dying year. Her robes of fire
Were tumbled all about; I marveled how
She spends the golden richness of her dress,
Casting it off in seeming wantonness,
On every bush and bough.

I saw her forest children rioting
In garments of her making,—oaks and firs
In stately gowns of rare embroidering,—
Maple and birch in gaudy gossamers
She did bedeck till they did sway and dance
For very arrogance.

But while I lingered there,
One towering oak, magnificent and grand,
Heeding her stern command
Which all the woodland family must keep,
Did doff his foliage till his limbs were bare,
To spread a mantle o'er a hillock where
A flower had gone to sleep.

TRIOLET

“**C**OME with me and be my love,”
Shepherds sang and so sing I;
Softly sighs the wooing dove,
“Come with me and be my love.”
Sweet all other songs above,
Purer notes we need not try—
“Come with me and be my love,”
Shepherds sang and so sing I.

ODE

At the Grave of a Famous Scientist

AND this is how
Earth takes her slow revenge on thee,
oh thou
Whom once she did allow
To use her at thy pleasure. Once the highest
Of her exalted places was for thee,
Her fairest crown of rarest brilliancy
Once decked thy brow,
And now
How low thy liest.

The churl of poor renown,
The humblest dweller in this silent town,
Thy equal now.
The rudest swain that toiled with spade or
plow,
Aye, and the vulgar clown,
With leering face
And hideous grimace,
Winning his meagre fare with leapings high
in air
And aping of the idiot's vacant stare,
Here in this last abiding place
Is housed as well as thou.

In other days
The dribbling of Time's moments thou didst
 know
And, swift or slow,
Thou in thy fumbling ways
Couldst count and measure, name
And number them. But long ago
The swift, resistless torrent of the years
O'erwhelmed and buried thee. Thy hopes
 and fears,
Thy boasted name and fame,
All share with thee the same
Inglorious fate.

Time was when thou couldst call
Great Nature forth from her most secret place
And, lifting like a pall
The veil she wears with all-becoming grace
To hide her modest face,
Bid her take heed
And understand,
When thou shouldst give command,
And serve thee at thy need.

See how thou dost atone
To her for that short hour of tyranny.
Mark how the very stone,
With mosses overgrown,

Whereon is scrawled the legend one-time
known

In all the lands, —

The story of thy great and wondrous deeds,—

With grim stolidity

She crushes ruthlessly

Between her busy fingers to supply

Food for the daily needs

Of shrubs and common weeds,

Compelling even trivial things thereby

To thus comply,

And satisfy

Her whimsical demands.

Nay, even the hands

That, clutching at the mystical retort

Where burn the eternal flames

That work her will,

Vain of their little skill,

With reckless meddling somehow sought to
thwart

The smallest of her aims,

And the eyes

That once explored

The dark recesses where are stored

Mysterious alkalies

Wherewith by her laborious enterprise

She purifies

Her secret hoard,
She slowly crumbles to the primal dust,
Which, with the common rust
And rubbish of her workshop, bye and bye,
She in her own good way
Will gather and assay,
Refine and put to serve as best it may
Her purpose low or high.

This, then, thy fate —
Can this poor service be
The just fulfillment of thy destiny,—
To live thy little day
In constant strife
With forms and forces strange
Throughout the range
Of elemental change,
And soon or late
Yield up thy feeble, flickering life
And thenceforth be but clay?

Oh God, shall it not be
Somewhere within Thy vast Eternity,
That we, even we,
The peevish prattlers in Thy Nursery,
May with larger, clearer vision see
Thy wondrous Mystery?
Give us to sometime know,

While the long ages flow
To Time's eternal sea,
Marked by the rhythmic roll
Of cosmic music, that the human soul,
From mortal bondage free,
Though tremblingly
And with but feeble art,
Still plays its humble, necessary part
In Thy great symphony.

IN A WOODLAND FAR AWAY

IN a woodland far away
Where the forest fairies play,
Strolling dreamily one summer long ago,
I could hear the distant sound
Of a brook that with a bound
Leaped from darkness toward the sunlight's
golden glow.

And its music in its bed
Was as though to me it said,
With the bubbling of its laughter and its
song:
"See me rippling as I run
Kissing lilies in the sun,
Hear me chuckling, gurgling, roistering all
day long.

"Come with me, thou pensive one;
Leave the shadows, learn to shun
Not the green fields and the blossoms by the
way;
Youth is fleeting; pleasures fly;
Storms are coming bye and bye,
And we'll miss the gladsome sunshine of
to-day."

And the echo of that song
By the southwind borne along,
Only now a distant memory appears;
But the lesson that it told,
'Mid the meadow's green and gold,
Sheds a radiance o'er the swiftly flying years.

AUTUMN DAYS

I WONDER, little playmate, dost thou
 know,
While thus we romp and roister, hand in
 hand,
Through all the fairy-land
Of joyous Summer's golden afterglow,
That while the forest trees
In gorgeous panoplies
Mingle their voices in grand symphonies,
'Tis but to sadly praise
The hectic beauty of the dying year,
To say: "The end is near,
This brightness but a memory shall appear
 In after days."

I wonder dost thou know, when youth is
 glowing,
And joy, the heart o'erflowing,
Leaps to the lips to find what vent it may
In song, 'tis but to say:
"Love's at its flood to-day,
To-morrow it will ebb its life away,
Bewail it as we may."

Oh playmate of the autumn afternoon,
Though all too soon
Love's roseate garlands change to somber
 greys,
Thy God is good to thee;
As yet thou canst not see
The after days.

A TRIBUTE

SPLENDIDLY heedless whether lost or
gained
The moment's conflict, he assumes again
The world old task, by heroes not disdained,
Of speaking common truths to common men.

'Mid humming looms, or in the crowded
mart,
Or 'neath the stars in some far distant place,
His voice needs no declamatory art:—
When manhood speaks 'tis heard through
boundless space.

QUATRAIN

WE search for Beauty in the starry skies
And Truth in angel's vesture long to
greet,
While Truth walks with us in an humble guise
And Beauty lays her tribute at our feet.

QUATRAIN

CHIDE not the vagabond that he hath
 strayed
 Unheeding forth from his ancestral
 hall,—
This good old Earth is but a wandering jade
 And she's the common mother of us all.

TRIOLET

WHEN Phyllis moves her lips to pray,
Oh then does Heaven itself draw near;
The holiest moment of the day,
When Phyllis moves her lips to pray.
Its mystic meaning none can say,
'Tis far too sweet for mortal ear.—
When Phyllis moves her lips to pray,
Oh then does Heaven itself draw near.

IN ABSENCE

EACH morn with weary eyes
I search the sea's far horizon anew,
While every wind from out the eastern blue
To all my eager questioning replies
As if in fond regret:
"Not yet, ah no, not yet."

Each evening, when alone
I wander in the woodland solitude,
Thinking to soothe my spirit's troubled mood,
Naught hear I save the forest's echoing
moan,
That ever seems to say,
"Thou art away, — away."

Each night, ah love, each night,
The while a welcome weariness benumbs
My tired spirit, soft the darkness comes
To shut the dreary day-world from my sight,
And sweet, oh sweet to me
Is slumber, for I dream of thee!

THE SOLITUDE OF THE SOUL

On Seeing the Statue by Lorado Taft

CHEERED by no voice of brother or
of friend
Shall yearning souls forever onward
go?

Shall unavailing tears forever flow

And eager hands to emptiness extend?

Hope, canst thou, then, no larger promise
send?

And faith, dost thou no other solace
know

For weary mortals in a world of woe,

Than groping blindly thus until the
end?

Surely some nobler destiny awaits

The steadfast soul by circumstance en-
thralled;

For spirits by Time's mockeries unappalled,

Who knows what plan the Master con-
templates?

For aching hearts at the long journey's close,

What blest companionship; who knows,—
who knows?

I MAY NOT SPEAK

I MAY not speak? Oh then, I pray thee,
let
Me silent be, but in thy presence still.
If any word of mine can bring thee ill,
My lightest whisper cause thee one regret,
Then am I mute as marble. I'll forget
The very name of love, though love shall fill
My heart to bursting with the poignant
thrill
Of its unuttered pain. Oh, keep me yet
Within thy soul's pure radiance; let
the years,
The few short years God gives me from His
store,
Be hallowed by thy touch; and if once
more
Our souls perchance shall meet in other
spheres,
I'll walk again beside thee, silently,
And ask no higher Heaven than that shall be.

SONNET

DEAR maid, from out whose laughing
 eyes of blue
The Springtime speaks and tells the
 welcome story
Of youth and love and hope, forever new,
To hearts wherein glad life's midsummer
 glory
Has paled to autumn's melancholy hue;—
I look on thee and straight my mortal vision
Dims in the radiance of a subtler view;
For, bright illumined by the light elysian
Of thy presaging sweetness, swift appears,
With hope and hope's fulfillment richly blent,
The grand procession of the coming years;
And crowning all, their fairest ornament,
Where once the blue-eyed, blushing maiden
 stood,
Earth's rarest blessing, perfect womanhood.

THE CALIFORNIA LADY

FROM that far land where the departing
day
Plays with the night its marvelous in-
terlude,

By some sweet magic thou hast brought away
The changing charm of evening, many hued—
Piquant, perplexing, baffling one to say
Which of thy many selves does most intrude,
Blending the sweetness of the flowery May
With hints of Summer's ripening plentitude;
Smiling, insouciant, turning grave to gay
Or gay to somber with thy Protean mood,
The fascinating arts thou dost display
Are not mere graces known to womanhood;—
No mortal thou, but elfin from the wild
Or sprite thou art, half goddess and half child.

SONNET

"Man is But a Differentiated Sunbeam."—John Fiske

"**T**HOU man," the savant said, "art but
a beam
Of sunlight, moulded thus by cosmic will
Through nature's subtle alchemy, until,
Endowed with godlike reason, thou dost
seem
Creation's masterpiece." But not the
gleam
Of wisdom shining in man's thought and
will
Shows best the Master's plan. A purer
still
And softer ray glows o'er life's turbid
stream,—
The light of woman's love. Those languor-
ous lights
That tint the rosy cheek of virgin day
When, lured by twilight, she approaches
night's
Mysterious bridal chamber,—fair are they,
But not so fair, so radiant, so divine
As in the souls of noblest women shine.

TO ONE WHO BADE ME SING

THOU bidst me sing ;
Oh Lady, say not so ;—
Once long ago,
Where silent waters flow
And nodding lilies grow,
I listened to the lute's low murmuring ;
And while I lingered there
One tiny string,
By Love's soft finger vexed,
Sang to the listening air
A note so pure and clear
Methought the angels paused to hear,
Sang out alone
One moment thus its wondrous tone,
And broke, the next.

My heart has but one song
When thou art near ;—
Though it appear
Silent the whole day long,
A voiceless thing,
Perhaps, perhaps 'tis better so ;—
Ah no,
Bid me not sing !

TACOMA

VAINLY the limner struggles to portray
Thy weird unearthly beauty. Vainly
savants may
Examine and compare. Wiser to say
There's nothing can compare. How blind
are they
Who think thee of the earth,—some mon-
strous clod,
Some unplanned consequence
Of warring elements!
Thou art a finger of the eternal God,
Made manifest in the common light of day
For common men to see,
To point in the sublime, majestic way
Toward the far heavens and forever say,
“There lies Reality.”

SONNET

Te, Domine, Sequor

WHEN from Thy path my froward feet
have strayed,
Good Master, and I've sought in sul-
len pride

To grope my way alone, Thy light denied,
Plunging thereby into the deeper shade
Of gathering despair,—when sore dismayed
My bruised spirit, vexed and overtried,
Has turned and from the depths to Thee has
cried,

Seeking again the refuge of Thy aid,
Oh then what rest has come—what wondrous
calm,

What radiance lighting the obscurity
The while in mercy Thou has beckoned me
Back to the way that I have wandered from.—
So have I learned in gratitude to bless
The kindly thorns that chid my wayward-
ness.

MOTHER AND BABE

BABY smiling up at me
With thy wondrous witchery,
Close those lustrous eyes of thine,
Oh thou baby mine.

In their limpid depths serene,
More of heaven than earth is seen,
Secrets written there I trow,
Mortals may not know.

With thee nestling on my breast,
This to me the holiest
Of life's moments, baby mine,
This the most divine.

Cease thy artless coquetry,
Lest thy mother stifle thee
With the mad impulsiveness
Of her fond caress.

Close the eyes where love lights dart,
Lest the mother's throbbing heart,
Clasping thee exultingly,
Break with ecstasy.

Close them lest the angels, seeing
Here on earth a heavenly being,
Take thee back to heaven again,
Grudging me this pain!

ASK NOT AGAIN

ASK not again that when our eyes have met
And the full heart for utterance shall
beseech,

When hands in mute farewell are clasping yet
And passionate words are crowding up for
speech—

When every quivering pulse beat has become
Love's loudly pleading messenger, oh, then
Ask not, I pray you, that the lips be dumb;
'Tis best perhaps, but—ask it not again!

OBSCURED IN DOUBT AND SADNESS

OBSCURED in doubt and sadness as
in endless night
My pathway lay;
No star of aspiration shed its radiant light
Across my way;
“All, all is but a hideous fantasy!” unto
My soul I cried;
“And thou shalt grope in shadows until thou
dost view
Life’s eventide!”

But He who doeth all things well vouchsafed
to me
A guiding star,
A purpose, greater than an earthly hope could
be,
And nobler far;
For in upon the darkness of my life there
shone
A light divine,
The light of one sweet soul; ah, need I say,
Dear One,
That soul was thine!

A SONG IN A WOODLAND

SOFT, soft and low
The streamlet's flow
Whispered: "I know
That love is nigh."
And deeper-toned,
The forest moaned:
"Love is enthroned
In earth and sky."

Each living thing
Did loudly sing:
"Love, love is king,
Happy are we!"
And only I
With wistful sigh
Did humbly cry:
"Oh love, forget not me!"

SONNET

"A Sonnet is a Moment's Monument"

IT may, perhaps, be never mine to gain
Admission into those ethereal bowers
Where tyrant Love holds carnival and
showers

Rich largess of his passion and his pain.
In striving thus to enter Love's domain,
To scale the lofty and embattled towers
That guard his gates, these weary hearts of
ours
Do oft beat out their little lives in vain.

What though such be my fate? What though
alone

I wander henceforth in the outer night?
This moment have I risen to love's height,
Love's ecstasy this moment have I known.—
And be God's future what it may for me,
I'll thank Him for this moment's memory.

A TWILIGHT DREAM

WHEN twilight comes
And shadows fall
From stately domes
And steeples tall,
Cloud banners furled
O'er mountain crest
Sign to the world:
"Peace, be at rest."
And from afar
The swallow greets
The evening star;
The throstle meets
Her mate returned
From distant flight,
His rest well earned,
Awarded.

Night
So gently spreads
With soft caress
O'er tired heads
In tenderness,
Her mantle of
Tranquillity;
While from above
All silently

The limpid beams
Of moonlight fall.
All nature seems
In Lethe's thrall.

With drowsy eye,
The daylight gone,
At rest I lie
And dream alone,
A twilight dream
Of sweet repose,
While swift the stream
Of memory flows.
Its depth serene
In turn portrays
Each tranquil scene
Of happier days
When Hope was young
And Faith could see
No thorns among
Life's rosary.

And in its calm
Seductive flow
A voice comes from
The long ago
To lull the sense

Of present pain
And lure me hence
To youth again,
Till present days
Of Hope's despair
Fade in the maze
Of memories fair,
And though the dreams
Of youth be done,
A light still gleams
Of love that's gone.

Thus may the bloom
Of youthful years
Dispel the gloom
When age appears,
And when Life's stream
Has ebbed away
Thus may I dream
Into the day
Of peace untold
And, waking then
Hear as of old
That voice again !

IN MEMORY

FAR down the stretch of the slow moving years,
I longing gaze with my poor mortal sight,
Searching if aught there be of friendly light
Gleaming across my way that now appears
Obscured in gloom. The welcoming ray that cheers
The onward faring pilgrim in the night,
Strive as I may, I cannot see aright
For blinding mists of ever-lingering tears.
Then, when the aching heart can bear no more,
Backward I turn to see thy face; and lo!
A light is all about me, and a glow
Of rainbow color tints the clouds before;
And onward striving with untroubled brow,
I breathe: "Love's memory—that is light
enow."

I KNOW NOT WHY

I KNOW not why, when the mad day is
gone
And all the evening stillness round me
broods,
Comes fancy oft' times with her fitful moods
To wake the old unrest. The hours speed on,
The somber veil of darkness closer drawn,
Enfolds me, while in deepening solitudes
Pensive I sit alone till day intrudes
And swarthy night pales into purple dawn.

I know not why I seek with faltering hand
To weave my thoughts in language. Can it be
That in the after days shall come to me
One who shall read and know and understand?
Then shall the waiting years, whate'er their
number,
Seem but a summer's night of tranquil slum-
ber.

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